

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 currently are pending. By way of the present response, claims 1 and 9 amended.

On November 21, 2006, Examiner Repko and the undersigned conducted a personal interview at the Patent Office. The undersigned appreciates the courtesies extended by the Examiner throughout the interview.

During the interview, the undersigned explained that a Z-buffer, such as the one described in Xie et al. patent, appears to store only depth information per pixel of pixels of a polygon, and why one of ordinary skill in the art would not have reasonably consider these buffer types to store “primitives,” as claimed. In response, the Examiner asserted that the Z-buffer could be considered to store a primitive because a plane could be defined at a particular depth, and the stored information could be considered to correspond to a polygon. Although Applicants disagree with this overly broad interpretation of this claimed term of the art, the Examiner suggested amendments to the independent claims that would further define primitives stored in the occlusion buffer, such as “vertex data associated with the primitives.” The Examiner also agreed that such an amendment would overcome the pending rejections based on the Xie et al. patent.

To advance the prosecution in this application, Applicants have adopted the Examiner’s suggestion and have amended independent claim 1 to recite that the occlusion data buffer “stores vertex data associated with the primitives, which are formed by at least three vertices.” A similar amendment has been made to independent claim 9. It is believed that all pending rejections utilizing Xie et al. are overcome.

For all the above reasons, the present application is now ready for allowance. Prompt notification of the same is earnestly sought.

Respectfully submitted,

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